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LETTER DATED 20 MARCH 1991 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Further to my decision to dispatch a mission in order to assess the humanitarian needs arising in Iraq and in Kuwait in the immediate post-crisis environment, I have the honour to inform you that the mission, led by Under-Secretary-General Martti Ahtisaari and comprising representatives of appropriate United Nations agencies and programmes, visited Iraq in the period from 10 to 17 March 1991.

In the light of the wish of the members of the Security Council to be kept informed of the progress of the mission (S/22322), I have the honour to transmit herewith, for their consideration, the report prepared by Mr. Ahtisaari concerning his visit to Iraq.

The Mission will commence its visit to Kuwait on 22 March 1991. I shall of course convey to you as soon as possible the report on that visit.

(Signed) Javier PEREZ de CUELLAR

Annex

Report to the Secretary-General on humanitarian needs in Kuwait and Iraq in the immediate post-crisis environment by a mission to the area led by Mr. Martti Ahtisaari, Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, dated 20 March 1991

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INTRODUCTION

1. You asked me to travel, as a matter of urgency, to Kuwait and Iraq to assess humanitarian needs there in the immediate post-crisis environment, and to bring with me a team comprising representatives of the appropriate United Nations agencies and programmes. Your decision was announced in a press statement of 1 March 1991.

2. On 3 March 1991, the President of the Security Council made a statement on behalf of the Council, in which it welcomed your announcement and invited you to keep it informed in the shortest possible time of the progress of this mission, in respect of which it pledged to take immediate action (S/22322).

3. In the days immediately preceding my departure, I consulted with all concerned parties, and met on 4 and 5 March 1991 with the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations, H.E. Dr. Abdul Amir A. Al-Anbari, and with the Chargé d'affaires of Kuwait to the United Nations, Ambassador Mohammad Saad Al-Sallal. Each pledged the full cooperation of his Government but mentioned logistical difficulties and communication problems with his capital. In my meeting with the representative of Kuwait I expressed a preference to travel there first. He, however, responded that his Government anticipated receiving a mission led by Mr. Abdulrahim Farah to assess losses and damages during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. His authorities preferred to receive that mission first. Thus, he believed that it would be more practical for my mission to travel first to Iraq before proceeding to Kuwait. He appreciated my desire to go first to his country and hoped that the mission could be received there in the near future.

4. I departed from New York on 7 March. The mission assembled at Geneva the following day. It comprised representatives not only of the Secretariat, but also of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). On my way to the Middle East, I consulted at Geneva with Mr. Claudio Caratsch, Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The mission travelled to Amman on 9 March and arrived at Baghdad on 10 March. At Amman, I was received by His Highness Crown Prince Hassan and by His Excellency Mr. Taher Al-Masri, Foreign Minister of Jordan. The mission remained in Iraq until 17 March. On that date I travelled to Bahrain while awaiting the outcome of consultations in New York and your further instructions. In Bahrain I met with the Foreign Minister, His Excellency Sheikh Mohamed bin Mubarak Al Khalifa. On 19 March you instructed me to return to New York. Leaving the remainder of the mission in Bahrain whilst awaiting the decision of the Kuwaiti Government, I departed that day and arrived in New York on 20 March. The Kuwaiti authorities have now informed you that the mission is expected to depart Bahrain for Kuwait on or about 22 March.

I. MODUS OPERANDI IN IRAQ

5. The mission began its work immediately upon arrival at Baghdad on 10 March, first linking up with local UNDP and UNICEF representatives and, later that day, meeting with His Excellency Mr. Mohamed Sa'eed Al-Sahaf, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and senior officials of the relevant government departments and of local authorities. Joint working groups were established with the various United Nations specialist members of the mission. These held their first meetings that same evening to establish work programmes. Field work was undertaken from 11 to 16 March at various locations in and around Baghdad. A longer field trip was made by a group from the mission, led by myself, to Mosul, 400 kilometres north-west of Baghdad, and I myself also inspected numerous locations in Greater Baghdad. I and members of the mission held meetings with representatives of foreign diplomatic missions at Baghdad and with senior representatives of ICRC. Members of the mission also met with representatives of several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who had made their way to Iraq to see the situation for themselves. I held final meetings in respect of the specialist teams' work with the Foreign Minister, His Excellency Mr. Tariq Aziz, and with the Minister of State and the participating senior officials, on the evening of 16 March.

6. The Iraqi authorities were fully cooperative in regard to the activities of the five specialist working groups. These dealt with: food and agriculture; water, sanitation and health; transportation and communications; energy; and refugees and other vulnerable groups. Members were able to inspect all locations and facilities that they had requested to see in the Baghdad area and in several other governorates, and could also engage in independent field research in wholesale and retail markets and undertake household surveys. However, the Government was unable to accede to my request that we visit Souera, Moussayeb, Basrah, Nasiriyah and Kirkuk. In respect of some, the problems were said to be logistical; in regard to others, concern for security was conveyed. I expressed regret at our inability to cover the whole country, because it was important that the United Nations should be able to assess the humanitarian needs of the entire population of Iraq in all regions. The authorities also expressed their regret on this subject, and we agreed that locally based United Nations staff would travel to these areas as soon as conditions permitted. It has, however, been possible to infer from information available from various other sources that needs are unlikely to vary greatly from what we ourselves observed, but it is reported that conditions may be substantially worse in certain locations.

II. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS IN REGARD TO IRAQ

7. A summary of the mission's findings and conclusions is set out below. It is based upon a number of internal working papers, technical annexes, visits to sites and oral reports by mission specialists.

A. General remarks

8. I and the members of my mission were fully conversant with media reports regarding the situation in Iraq and, of course, with the recent WHO/UNICEF report on water, sanitary and health conditions in the Greater Baghdad area. It should, however, be said at once that nothing that we had seen or read had quite prepared us for the particular form of devastation which has now befallen the country. The recent conflict has wrought near-apocalyptic results upon the economic infrastructure of what had been, until January 1991, a rather highly urbanized and mechanized society. Now, most means of modern life support have been destroyed or rendered tenuous. Iraq has, for some time to come, been relegated to a pre-industrial age, but with all the disabilities of post-industrial dependency on an intensive use of energy and technology.

9. My mandate was limited to assessing the need for urgent humanitarian assistance. It did not extend to the huge task of assessing the requirements for reconstructing Iraq's destroyed infrastructure, much less, to developmental matters. Accordingly, my report to you, in its several technical sections, seeks with as much exactitude as possible to convey the extent of needs in the primary areas of humanitarian concern: for safe water and sanitation, basic health and medical support; for food; for shelter; and for the logistical means to make such support actually available. Underlying each analysis is the inexorable reality that, as a result of war, virtually all previously viable sources of fuel and power (apart from a limited number of mobile generators) and modern means of communication are now, essentially, defunct. The far-reaching implications of this energy and communications' vacuum as regards urgent humanitarian support are of crucial significance for the nature and effectiveness of the international response.

10. These conditions, together with recent civil unrest in some parts of the country, mean that the authorities are as yet scarcely able even to measure the dimensions of the calamity, much less respond to its consequences, because they cannot obtain full and accurate data. Additionally, there is much less than the minimum fuel required to provide the energy needed for movement or transportation, irrigation or generators for power to pump water and sewage. For instance, emergency medical supplies can be moved to health centres only with extreme difficulty and, usually, major delay. Information regarding local needs is slow and sparse. Most employees are simply unable to come to work. Both the authorities and the trade unions estimate that approximately 90 per cent of industrial workers have been reduced to inactivity and will be deprived of income as of the end of March. Government departments have at present only marginal attendance. Prior to recent events, Iraq was importing about 70 per cent of its food needs. Now, owing to the fuel shortage, the inability to import and the virtual breakdown of the distribution system, the flow of food through the private sector has been reduced to a trickle, with costs accelerating upwards. Many food prices are already beyond the purchasing reach of most Iraqi families. Agricultural production is highly mechanized, and much land depends on pumped-water irrigation. Should the main harvest in June 1991 be seriously affected by a lack of energy to drive machines and pump water, then an already grave situation will be further aggravated. As shown below, prospects for the 1992 harvest could, for combined reasons, be in at least as much jeopardy. Having regard to the nature of

Iraq's society and economy, the energy vacuum is an omnipresent obstacle to the success of even a short-term, massive effort to maintain life-sustaining conditions in each area of humanitarian need.

B. Food and agriculture

11. Mission members held working sessions with counterparts from the relevant ministries, visited social centres where various vulnerable groups are cared for, agricultural production areas, a seed production centre, a veterinary health centre and a dairy production unit. The mission noted that Iraq has been heavily dependent on food imports which have amounted to at least 70 per cent of consumption needs. Seed was also imported. Sanctions decided upon by the Security Council had already adversely affected the country's ability to feed its people. New measures relating to rationing and enhanced production were introduced in September 1990. These were, however, in turn, negatively affected by the hostilities which impacted upon most areas of agricultural production and distribution.

12. Food is currently made available to the population both through government allocation and rations, and through the market. The Ministry of Trade's monthly allocation to the population of staple food items fell from 343,000 tons in September 1990 to 182,000 tons, when rationing was introduced, and was further reduced to 135,000 tons in January 1991 (39 per cent of the pre-sanctions level). While the mission was unable to gauge the precise quantities still held in government warehouses, all evidence indicates that flour is now at a critically low level, and that supplies of sugar, rice, tea, vegetable oil, powdered milk and pulses are currently at critically low levels or have been exhausted. Distribution of powdered milk, for instance, is now reserved exclusively for sick children on medical prescription.

13. Livestock farming has been seriously affected by sanctions because many feed products were imported. The sole laboratory producing veterinary vaccines was destroyed during the conflict, as inspected by the mission. The authorities are no longer able to support livestock farmers in the combat of disease, as all stocks of vaccine were stated to have been destroyed in the same sequence of bombardments on this centre, which was an FAO regional project.

14. The country has had a particular dependence upon foreign vegetable seeds, and the mission was able to inspect destroyed seed warehouses. The relevant agricultural authorities informed the mission that all stocks of potatoes and vegetable seeds had been exhausted. Next season's planting will be jeopardized if seeds are not provided before October 1991.

15. This year's grain harvest in June is seriously compromised for a number of reasons, including failure of irrigation/drainage (no power for pumps, lack of spare parts); lack of pesticides and fertilizers (previously imported); and lack of fuel and spare parts for the highly-mechanized and fuel-dependent harvesting machines. Should this harvest fail, or be far below average, as is very likely barring a rapid change in the situation, widespread starvation conditions become a real possibility.

16. The official programme for the support of socially dependent groups of the population (the elderly, disabled, mothers and children, hospital patients, orphans, refugees, etc.) is affected by the overall grave deficiencies in the food situation.

17. The mission had the opportunity to conduct independent research relating to household costs and living standards in Baghdad. Such standards have declined rapidly in the last months, while food and fuel prices have climbed dramatically. Price increases in the August to January period reflected shortages of supply, but since January there has been a further acceleration of price increases reflecting both supply shortages and the breakdown of the transport system. Interviews with private wholesale food distributors revealed that their stocks are near depletion and they no longer have an organized private transport capacity, owing to fuel shortages. The government-initiated rationing system was designed to provide families with a fraction of their basic necessities at prices comparable to those prevailing before August. The system allows families either 5 kilograms per person, per month, of flour or 3 loaves of baked bread; 10 kilograms per family, per month, of liquid cooking gas; 1 bar of soap per person, per month, etc. However, independent surveys conducted by the mission in several diverse areas of Baghdad showed that many families cannot draw their full rations, since the distribution centres are often depleted and they have great difficulty in travelling to other centres. The quality of food distributed has itself deteriorated to the point of causing health problems. Most families also reported that they could not meet their needs through the private markets. Despite official price controls, the independent market surveys conducted by the mission showed hyperinflation since August. The price of most basic necessities has increased by 1,000 per cent or more. For example, flour is now 5-6 dinars per kilogram (and seemingly still rising); rice has risen to 6 dinars per kilogram; sugar to 5 dinars per kilogram; lentils to 4 dinars per kilogram; and whole milk to 10 dinars. In contrast to this hyperinflation, many incomes have collapsed. Many employees cannot draw salaries, the banking system has in large measure closed down and withdrawals are limited to 100 dinars per month. The minimum monthly wage was 54 dinars and the average monthly salary of a civil servant was 70 dinars. In short, most families lack access to adequate rations or the purchasing power to meet normal minimal standards.

18. The mission recommends that, in these circumstances of present severe hardship and in view of the bleak prognosis, sanctions in respect of food supplies should be immediately removed, as should those relating to the import of agricultural equipment and supplies. The urgent supply of basic commodities to safeguard vulnerable groups is strongly recommended, and the provision of major quantities of the following staples for the general population: milk, wheat flour, rice, sugar, vegetable oil and tea. These are required to meet minimum general requirements until the next harvest. Safeguarding the harvest means the urgent importation of fertilizers, pesticides, spare parts, veterinary drugs, agricultural machinery and equipment, etc. The mission was able to quantify many of these needs. The disappearance of vegetables from the country's markets also appears likely by the summer, and seed importation is crucial.

19. The mission observes that, without a restoration of energy supplies to the agricultural production and distribution sectors, implementation of many of the above recommendations would be to little effect. Drastic international measures across the whole agricultural spectrum are most urgent.

C. Water, sanitation and health

20. As regards water, prior to the crisis Baghdad received about 450 litres per person supplied by seven treatment stations purifying water from the Tigris river. The rest of the country had about 200-250 litres per person per day, purified and supplied by 238 central water-treatment stations and 1,134 smaller water projects. All stations operated on electric power; about 75 per cent had standby diesel-powered generators. Sewage was treated to an acceptable standard before being returned to the rivers.

21. With the destruction of power plants, oil refineries, main oil storage facilities and water-related chemical plants, all electrically operated installations have ceased to function. Diesel-operated generators were reduced to operating on a limited basis, their functioning affected by lack of fuel, lack of maintenance, lack of spare parts and non-attendance of workers. The supply of water in Baghdad dropped to less than 10 litres per day but has now recovered to approximately 30-40 litres in about 70 per cent of the area (less than 10 per cent of the overall previous use). Standby generating capacity is out of order in several pumping stations and cessation of supplies will therefore ensue if current machinery goes out of order for any reason (spare parts are not available owing to sanctions). As regards the quality of water in Baghdad, untreated sewage has now to be dumped directly into the river - which is the source of the water supply - and all drinking-water plants there and throughout the rest of the country are using river water with high sewage contamination. Recently, the water authority has begun to be able to improve the quality of drinking water by adding more of the remaining stock of alum and chlorine after assurances from UNICEF and ICRC that emergency aid would be provided. Chemical tests are now being conducted at the stations but no bacteriological testing and control is possible because of the lack of electricity necessary for the functioning of laboratories, the shortage of necessary chemicals and reagents and the lack of fuel for the collection of samples. No chlorine tests are being conducted because of the lack of fuel for sampling. While the water authority has warned that water must be boiled, there is little fuel to do this, and what exists is diminishing. Cool winter conditions have prevailed until recently.

22. Only limited information is available to authorities regarding the situation in the remainder of the country because all modern communications systems have been destroyed and information is now transmitted and received (in this sector as in all others) by person-to-person contact. In those areas where there are no generators, or generators have broken down, or the fuel supply is exhausted, the population draws its water directly from polluted rivers and trenches. This is widely apparent in rural areas, where women and children can be seen washing and filling water receptacles. The quantity and quality of water produced by treatment centres is very variable and in many locations there are no chemicals available for

purification. No quality control - chlorine testing, chemical testing or bacteriological testing - is being conducted.

23. The mission identified the various problems mentioned above: heavy sewage-pollution of water intakes; absence or acute shortage of water-treatment chemicals, especially aluminium sulphate (alum) and chlorine; lack of power to operate equipment; lack or shortage of diesel to run generators; inability to repair generators because of lack of spare parts; in some instances a total absence of generators; the destruction of some stations; absence of water-testing; lack of a health surveillance system in respect of communicable, and, especially, water-borne diseases. A further major problem, now imminent, is the climate. Iraq has long and extremely hot summers, the temperature often reaching 50 degrees Celsius. This has two main implications: (a) the quantity of water must be increased, and a minimum target of 50 litres per person per day has to be attained (this entails a gross output of 65 litres per person at the source); and (b) the heat will accelerate the incubation of bacteria, and thus the health risks ascribable to the water quality (already at an unacceptable level) will be further exacerbated - especially viewed in the overall sanitary circumstances which have already led to a fourfold increase in diarrhoeal disease incidence among children under five years of age, and the impact of this on their precarious nutritional status.

24. As regards sanitation, the two main concerns relate to garbage disposal and sewage treatment. In both cases, rapidly rising temperatures will soon accentuate an existing crisis. Heaps of garbage are spread in the urban areas and collection is poor to non-existent. The work of collection vehicles is hampered by lack of fuel, lack of maintenance and spare parts and lack of labour, because workers are unable to come to work. Incinerators are in general not working, for these same reasons, and for lack of electric power. Insecticides, much needed as the weather becomes more torrid, are virtually out of stock because of sanctions and a lack of chemical supplies. As previously stated, Iraqi rivers are heavily polluted by raw sewage, and water levels are unusually low. All sewage treatment and pumping plants have been brought to a virtual standstill by the lack of power supply and the lack of spare parts. Pools of sewage lie in the streets and villages. Health hazards will build in the weeks to come.

25. As regards health conditions, the mission reviewed the situation since the special joint WHO-UNICEF mission in February 1991. It found that the recommendations made in that report (S/22328), subsequently approved by the Security Council Committee established by resolution 661 (1990) concerning the situation between Iraq and Kuwait, were well-founded. The mission also identified any further immediate health problems that needed to be addressed over the next three to six months. It also identified constraints that hamper the implementation of the already-agreed recommendations of the joint mission. It found that health conditions in Baghdad and throughout the country remain precarious. A major factor is the water and sanitation situation described above. Additionally, the total lack of telephone communication and drastically reduced transport capability pose other problems to the health system since basic information on communicable diseases cannot be collected and disseminated, and essential drugs, vaccines and medical supplies cannot be distributed efficiently to the country. Mission health

experts therefore focused especially on control and prevention of communicable diseases; water quality control; and logistics support for an effective distribution system from Baghdad to outlying regions of vaccines, drugs and medical supplies, as well as infant formula.

26. There is an urgent need to establish a national surveillance and reporting capacity for communicable diseases. This would require the establishment of sentinel sites that can test for the major communicable diseases, as well as the capacity to collate and analyse resulting data on a national scale in a timely manner. Communications, functional laboratories, including necessary chemicals and reagents, and transport and power resources are essential to provide for this emergency humanitarian need. The question of water quality control has already been described. The fourfold increase in incidence of diarrhoeal diseases amongst young children reported by the WHO/UNICEF mission has been reconfirmed by findings recently obtained in 11 sentinel sites in Baghdad. The water and sanitation situation contributes to this problem which must be expected to increase as the summer approaches. The mission concluded that a catastrophe could be faced at any time if conditions do not change. It assessed the detailed requirements for water quality control. As for logistics, this sector is at present especially affected by the same problems that exist in the rest of society.

27. The mission's recommendations regarding water, sanitation and health, on an urgent humanitarian basis, are as follows:

(a) For water, needs have to be calculated in such a way as to permit a minimum quantity of safe water through the hot season from April to September. Assistance, similar to that approved earlier, should be provided to cities outside Baghdad, including the necessary quantities of fuel for generators and transport; lubricants for engines; aluminium sulphate; chlorine; generators for water stations; skid-mounted river water treatment units; chemical dosing pumps; gas chlorinators; pump sets; spare parts; collars for water pipes; and reagents for chemical tests;

(b) For sanitation needs, these include: fuel and spare parts for garbage collection trucks, as well as insecticides; fuel and spare parts for the sewage disposal system (all of which is mechanical and imported); and hoses for drawing water with tanker-trucks;

(c) As regards medical needs, the mission concluded that a number of items were essential to deal with urgent humanitarian needs and established requirements. They include the provision of essential drugs and vaccines, as approved earlier, on a more extended scale, chemicals and reagents, generators, battery-operated incubators, means of alternative communication, requirements for the reinstitution of the cold chain for vaccines, and some vehicles;

(d) Without fuel, power and communications, the needed measures indicated above could, however, prove more or less ineffectual. Estimates of related fuel requirements have been made by the mission.

D. Refugees and other vulnerable groups

28. Conditions described above affect the whole population of Iraq and, most especially, low-income groups. The mission paid particular attention to the plight of especially vulnerable groups, whether Iraqi or non-Iraqi. Thus, it found that care for orphans, the elderly and the handicapped had been in many instances disrupted, with residents of institutions having had to be moved and regrouped at various locations. It recommends the urgent implementation of a humanitarian programme aimed at enabling some 25 orphanages and 71 other social welfare centres to resume their normal activities and at providing their beneficiaries with essential relief supplies, and specifies essential inputs for this purpose.

29. As regards the displaced and the homeless, the authorities themselves have not yet been able fully to assess the impact of the recent hostilities. They have, however, calculated that approximately 9,000 homes were destroyed or damaged beyond repair during the hostilities, of which 2,500 were in Baghdad and 1,900 were in Basrah. This has created a new homeless potential total of 72,000 persons. Official help is now hampered by the conditions described throughout this report and, especially, a virtual halt in the production of local building materials and the impossibility to import. The input of essential materials should be permitted.

30. The mission was unable, in the time available and having regard to the incomplete data in the hands of the authorities, to ascertain the number of foreign workers of Arab and other nationalities still resident in Iraq. It has been estimated that approximately 750,000 were still present in January 1991. It can at this stage be no more than a matter of surmise whether a number of those remaining may be in need of support to return to their countries of origin.

31. Some 64,000 Iranian nationals, protected under either the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 14 August 1949, or the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, had previously resided in three camps in Iraq. There has been substantial dislocation of some of these persons. Others have indicated their desire for repatriation. Limited relief assistance is urgently needed for some of those who have been obliged to leave one of the camps. Additionally, some 80,000 Palestinians are resident in Iraq, including a group of 35,000 considered as refugees benefiting from the protection of the Iraqi Government. It has been reported that several hundred Palestinians have recently come to Baghdad from Kuwait and are now in need of emergency assistance. Certain measures have been developed to provide urgent assistance to those most in need.

E. Logistics: transportation, communications and energy

32. The mission examined transportation, communications and energy facilities, as it increasingly emerged that adequate logistics and energy would be essential to support and make effective emergency humanitarian assistance.

33. As regards transportation, the fact that the country has been on a war footing almost continuously since 1980 has undermined its capacity. At present, Iraq's

sole available surface transport link with the outside world is via Amman to Aqaba. (It has been reported that a bridge has recently been destroyed on the Iskenderun/Mersin road to Iraq from Turkey; and the ports of Basrah and Umm Qasr are currently out of use; nor has there for some years been any direct cargo traffic to Iraq via the Syrian Arab Republic.) Internal transportation by road is now severely affected by a lack of spare parts and tyres and, above all, by a lack of fuel. Some internal railway capability still exists on the Baghdad-Mosul line. The mission was informed that a total of 83 road bridges had been destroyed and a number were inspected.

34. As regards communications, the mission was informed that all internal and external telephone systems had been destroyed, with the exception of a limited local exchange in one town. It had the opportunity to inspect a number of war-damaged or destroyed facilities and experienced for itself the situation in the Greater Baghdad and other urban areas. Communication in Iraq is now on a person-to-person basis, as mail services have also disintegrated.

35. The role of energy in Iraq is especially important because of the level of its urbanization (approximately 72 per cent of the population lives in towns), its industrialization, and its prolonged, very hot, summers. Pre-war energy consumption consisted of oil and refined products (85 per cent), electricity (14.8 per cent) and other sources (0.2 per cent). About 30 per cent of electric power generation was hydro-power. Bombardment has paralysed oil and electricity sectors almost entirely. Power output and refineries' production is negligible and will not be resumed until the first repair phase is complete. The limited and sporadic power supply in some residential areas and for health facilities is provided by mobile generators. There have, officially, been virtually no sales of gasoline to private users since February. The mission was told that the only petrol, oil and lubricants (POL) products now available are heating oil (rationed to 60 litres per month, per family) and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), which is rationed to one cylinder per month, per family. The authorities stated that stocks of these two products are close to exhaustion and that their distribution is expected to cease within the next 2-4 weeks. While work is under way to clear sites and assess damages, lack of communications and transport is retarding this activity. Initial inspections are said to show that necessary repairs to begin power generation and oil refining at minimal levels may take anywhere from 4 to 13 months. Minimal survival level to undertake humanitarian activities would require approximately 25 per cent of pre-war civilian domestic fuel consumption. Its absence, given the proximate onset of hot weather conditions, may have calamitous consequences for food, water supply and for sanitation; and therefore for health conditions. It seems inescapable that these fuel imports must take place urgently, and units and spare parts will also be required to enable Iraq to meet its own humanitarian needs as soon as possible. Under optimal circumstances it would be difficult or impossible for such needs to be provided from other sources given all the circumstances of that country's economy and social conditions, and bearing also in mind the limited bulk transportation possibilities that are likely to exist for the foreseeable future.

36. During my final meetings in Baghdad on 16 March I made reference to the need to be able to assess the effective utilization of all inputs that might in future

be established under the responsibility of the United Nations. The Government assured the mission that it would accept a system of monitoring of imports and their utilization.

F. Observations

37. The account given above describes as accurately as the mission has been able, using all sources, including much independent observation, to ascertain the situation, which, within the time available and the travel limitations referred to earlier, was perceived to exist in regard to urgent humanitarian needs in Iraq during the week of 10-17 March. I, together with all my colleagues, am convinced that there needs to be a major mobilization and movement of resources to deal with aspects of this deep crisis in the fields of agriculture and food, water, sanitation and health. Yet the situation raises, in acute form, other questions. For it will be difficult, if not impossible, to remedy these immediate humanitarian needs without dealing with the underlying need for energy, on an equally urgent basis. The need for energy means, initially, emergency oil imports and the rapid patching up of a limited refining and electricity production capacity, with essential supplies from other countries. Otherwise, food that is imported cannot be preserved and distributed; water cannot be purified; sewage cannot be pumped away and cleansed; crops cannot be irrigated; medicaments cannot be conveyed where they are required; needs cannot even be effectively assessed. It is unmistakable that the Iraqi people may soon face a further imminent catastrophe, which could include epidemic and famine, if massive life-supporting needs are not rapidly met. The long summer, with its often 45 or even 50 degree temperatures (113-122 degrees Fahrenheit), is only weeks away. Time is short.